



Reflections of Yesteryear

Martin L. Ashley, Church Historian

Things turn up in the strangest places!!! This was the case for me recently as I was doing research on some of our minister's and the colleges they attended.

Our first minister, the Rev. George F. Chipperfield graduated from Williams College in New York in 1876. I e-mailed the Alumni department, asking if they had anything on him, not expecting to come up with much. I received an answer back stating that they did have some biographical data on him as well as a picture. I could hardly believe my ears – I had never seen a picture of Rev. Chipperfield!!! So on the next page you will see what our first minister looked like. He was called in November of 1884 and

served our infant congregation for four years, helping the members get on their feet and laying the groundwork for the church that we are today.

The following is taken from a letter written by Rev. Chipperfield's daughter, Mrs. F. C. Kelley to Mrs. Thelma Robinson at Williams College who was seeking information on him. It helped to fill in a lot of missing data and shed light on what he did after leaving Battle Creek.

Dear Mrs. Robinson:

My brother has asked me to write in answer to your recent letter asking for information about our father, George F. Chipperfield, of the Class of 1876. I am sorry that I have no clipping of length to send you, but the main facts are as follows.

Father was born in 1852 in Greenwich, New London, England. His father was William Frederick and his mother Caroline Chipperfield. In 1856 he came with his family to this country and settled in Springfield,

Ohio, where he grew up and prepared for college. After Williams [College] he studied at the Yale Theological Seminary 1876-7; and at the Chicago [Theological Seminary] 1877-8. I am not sure about details. He was ordained as a Congregational minister and served as pastor of churches in Sterling, Illinois; Pierre, Dakota (before Dakota was divided; Battle Creek, Michigan and Malone, New York. In 1897 he resigned from the ministry and was admitted to the bar. He came to New York [City] in 1899 and lived here until his death.

Father was twice married. 1st to Elizabeth Walter of Chicago, deceased; 2nd to Marie Delatour of Aurora, Illinois, who survives him, with his two sons J. A. Chipperfield and W. B. Chipperfield and one daughter Mrs. F. C. Kelley, all of New York.

The facts are meager but I trust will be sufficient for the purposes. If any [?] piece of information has been omitted please let me know and I will write you at once.

*Yours Sincerely,
Mrs. F. C. Kelley*

After settling in New York City, Rev. Chipperfield continued to practice law for a period of time and later went into business. He died in New York City on May 19, 1930, leaving his wife, Marie and three children.



George Frederic Chipperfield
Class of 1876 – Williams
College, New York
Courtesy of Williams College
Archives